

REMARKS

The examiner is thanked for indicating that claims 1-3, 5-8, and 18-21 are allowed, and that claims 13-17 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

The examiner is also thanked for conducting a telephonic conference with Applicant's representative on November 30, 2007, for suggesting amending independent claim 9 to delete all of the features added thereto from original claims 10 and 11 and to add all of the features recited in claim 13, and for suggesting adding new claims 22 and 23 directed to all of the features in original claims 10 and 11, respectively.

Reconsideration of the pending application is respectfully requested on the basis of the following particulars.

1. Amendments and Support for Same

Independent claim 9 has been amended to delete all of the features previously added thereto from original claims 10 and 11. Claim 9 has been further amended to recite all of the features recited in claim 13. Accordingly, dependent claims 14-16 have been amended to change their dependency accordingly.

New claims 22-23 have been added, as suggested by the examiner, wherein claims 22-23 correspond to original claims 10 and 11, respectively. Accordingly, dependent claim 17 has been amended to change its dependency to new claim 22. By the addition of new claims 22-23 and the amendment of claim 17, claims 22, 23, and 17 now have the same relationship as in original claims 10, 11, and 17, respectively.

Claim 1 has been amended to correct a minor error of typographical and grammatical nature.

Approval and entry of the amendments are respectfully requested.

2. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

With respect to the rejection of claims 9 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Balanchard (US 5,629,929) in view of Papasakellariou (US 6,904,106), in the interest of expediting the allowance of this application, Applicant has amended claim 9 as discussed above to include all of the allowable features of claim 13. Claim 13 has been cancelled accordingly. Therefore, the rejection of claims 9 and 12 has been rendered as moot.

3. Conclusion

In view of the amendments to the claims, and in further view of the foregoing remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, it is requested that claims 1-3, 5-9, and 12-27 be allowed along with claims 18-21 and the application be passed to issue.

If any issues remain that may be resolved by a telephone or facsimile communication with the Applicant's attorney, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the numbers shown.

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Date: March 11, 2008

Respectfully submitted,



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